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III. HOWE TO PREVOST.

Boston, May 5, 1808.

Sir,

I arrived here in the *Emulous* the 22d Ult. on which Morning, I proceeded with Lieut. Garbett, to the Town; and on landing, went with him to the Custom-House, when he delivered a very proper Letter from Captain Stupart, to the Collector, in which was stated that he was the bearer of Dispatches to Mr. Erskine, His Majesty's Minister at Washington, and expressing his Wish to be permitted to discharge this duty in perfect conformity to the Directions contained in the President's Proclamation.

The Collector¹⁵ received us politely, and without a minute's hesitation, expressed in the fullest manner his acquiescence in Captain Stupart's desire, and said he might land with the Dispatches when he pleased. I then stated to him that I had come as a passenger in the *Emulous* on a visit to my friends, and requested permission to land my Trunk, and would thank him to direct a proper Officer to inspect it. He replied, that was quite unnecessary, and I might land it when I pleased. Having thanked him for his politeness, we left the Office. But on a little reflection, we agreed to return to the Custom-House, and make another request, which if granted, would leave us, while the ship remained here, in full possession of all the indulgence that was necessary either for duty or convenience. We expressed a wish, that the Boat which would immediately return to the Ship, should be permitted to take from the Market such Articles of Provision, as might now, or during her stay, be wanted. This the Collector also, most readily granted, and from that period to the present, the Purser has had as ready access to the Market of Boston, as he could have to the Market at Halifax.

Captain Stupart landed with his Dispatches next Morning; and every day afterwards, a part of the Officers were on shore, and permitted to go where they pleased. They have been in every instance received with politeness, and the mutual acts of Civility which have passed, will I am convinced, be attended with the happiest political effects. And I cannot help here remarking, that the experiment thus made of the present feelings of this Section of the American Union, could not have been committed to an Officer more completely fitted to the task than Captain Stupart. His uncommon suavity of Manners have rendered him agreeable to every description of the Community with whom he has occasionally mixed, and such is the strict, yet pleasing discipline of his ship, that while Officers and Men look up to him with the most marked respect, he has excited their utmost veneration, and they appear studiously proud to imitate his correct and orderly manners. I am convinced that good will result to both Countries from the reciprocal kindly intercourse, which has so freely taken place between Captain Stupart, his Officers, and the inhabitants here. I should not have so fully noticed this circumstance, was it not from the conviction, that as things trifling in themselves, have often led to the most serious contests among Nations, so by circumstances, apparently full as trifling, have these contentions been brought to a happy termination. And I am convinced, if care is taken, while the present jealousy sub-

¹⁵ Henry Dearborn.

sists between the Countries, to select temperate, judicious persons to hold such communications as may be necessary, and circumstances that would lead to irritation are carefully avoided, that the period is not far distant when a friendly intercourse will be renewed between the respective Countries.

A day or two after my arrival here, I was attacked in a violent democratic Paper, which your Excellency will find among the Papers enclosed;¹⁶ but it excited no other sensation here than general contempt, and the Federal Printers were preparing to attack the Editor, which I was obliged to take pains to prevent, as it was altogether inconsistent with the object of my pursuits, to excite, in any degree the public attention towards me.

I have, from the day of my arrival been treated with the utmost kindness, by all descriptions of the community; have conversed as freely on all topics, as I could have done in Halifax, and have without restraint gone where I pleased, and viewed what I pleased.

On our entrance into the Harbour, the first noticeable object that strikes the eye is the remains of two Redoubts which appear to have been formerly erected to defend the Entrance into Nantasket Road. They appear in a perfectly ruinous state, and are at present not calculated to be considered of any defensive use whatever. As we passed Fort Independence (formerly Castle William) slowly in the Boat, I had a good View of the Fort, and am convinced from my own observations, and the enquiries I have since made, that though much money has been expended on it, it is inferior as a defensive post to what it was when in our possession.¹⁷ Its garrison consists of about 50 Men commanded by a Major. This gentleman expressed to a friend of mine his wish to invite Captain Stupart and his Officers to dine at the Castle, but thought in the present state of parties in the Country it would not be prudent to do it. On one or two Islands and at Dorchester Heights are to be seen the remains of Redoubts, which were thrown up during the Revolutionary War, and which appear in that state of ruin which such a lapse of time is calculated to produce. After examining all the Heights calculated for defensive positions in or about the Town, there is nothing to be seen, but the remains of Works in a state of Ruin, no guns mounted, nor any appearance whatever, that could lead to the most distant idea that they either contemplated war, or were wishing to be prepared for it.

The great number of new and elegant buildings which have been erected in this Town, within the last ten years, strike the eye with astonishment, and prove the rapid manner in which these people have been acquiring wealth. The revolutionary situation of Europe, has made them the most exclusive [extensive] Carriers of the Powers at War with Great Britain—their extensive Fisheries and Lumber Trade, with a great surplus of Provisions and other staple commodities for exportation, which they have been permitted, almost without restraint, to carry to Great Britain and her Islands, have filled them with that Wealth the

¹⁶ Efforts made to identify this newspaper article have not been successful.

¹⁷ A report on fortifications which the Secretary of War sent to the House of Representatives on December 8, 1807, records as follows: "Fort Independence, Boston Harbor. A regular, strong, inclosed work of masonry, with magazine, quarters, barracks, and other buildings, commenced in the year 1800 and completed in 1803." *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, I. 223.

operative effects of which are so visible in every direction, that they cannot fail most forceably to strike the eye of even a superficial observer.

In proportion, however, to this appearance of Wealth and prosperity, is the state of suffering they are at present reduced to. Before the Embargo, not a House or Store remained long unoccupied in this Town. It is now computed that there are at least 500 Stores and Houses to let, as the late occupiers of them have been either obliged to go into the Country, or to turn their attention to other pursuits, than those they were engaged in for support. Wharves where immense bustle were visible before, are in a manner deserted. Trademen particularly those whose employments depended on Shipping, are suffering very severely. All descriptions of the Country are more or less effected, and you scarcely meet a person who is not complaining: And yet they appear to endure it with a degree of philosophy that is really surprising in a Country where the actions of Men are under so little restraint.

Distressing as is the situation of this country occasioned by the Embargo, it is producing the very best effects as respects Great Britain. Every one feels that he suffers, and he is daily led to enquire, Why he thus suffers, and who are the authors of his sufferings. The unqualified and frank disavowal in His Majesty's speech of the attack on the *Chesapeake*, joined with the temperate expressions contained in the Speeches of the leading Members of our Administration in Parliament, and the general friendly communications of Mr. Rose, are gradually establishing in the minds of people here, the conviction, that Great Britain does not wish to disturb their tranquility: and though as far as respects the point on which the negotiation finally terminated, they seem to have a general coincidence in opinion with the President, yet I am satisfied that the wish is general, that some compromise could be adopted: and on general politics they appear more disposed to blame their own Government than ours.

Great as are the distresses of the merchants here, they are trifling to what they have suffered at New York, where Bankruptcies are innumerable, and to immense amount. Only three or four failures have taken place here, and those not of much magnitude. Great quantities of British Goods are to be seen in the innumerable stores in this Town. As the intercourse is stopped by the Embargo, these goods are rising, in some instances from 10 to 20 per cent., and I am satisfied that as far as respects the debts due here to British Merchants, there will not ultimately be much loss. The most general distress in this State, has taken place at Portland (formerly Casco Bay). This Settlement has carried on an extensive Lumber Trade with Liverpool, besides its supply of Fish and Lumber to the West Indies. They were rising most rapidly from the credit of the British Merchants, and pushing their Enterprises beyond the extent of any capital they had acquired, and to the very utmost extent of the Credit they could obtain,—the Embargo has paralyzed all their efforts, and involved them, with very few exceptions, in one general state of ruin and bankruptcy. All the Commercial Towns in this State have more or less suffered by this ruinous measure, but, none to the extent that Portland has done.

Your Excellency will perceive by the Papers, that though Governor

Sullivan has succeeded in his Election,¹⁸ yet that he will carry it by a very trifling majority, and when the respectability of the Party which opposes him is taken into consideration it affords to their opponents no real ground of triumph: For in mixing with this Community it readily strikes every one that the wealth, talents, and national ideas of Government centre almost exclusively in the federal Party. A large proportion of the Democrats, with whom I have freely conversed, appear as much opposed to the present measures of the Government as their opponents, but considering Governor Sullivan as the head of their party here, they have exerted themselves to effect his re-election, lest his failure, should involve the party in disgrace. But though it is considered from the Votes returned, that the re-election of Governor Sullivan is certain—yet the Federalists have succeeded in obtaining a Federal Senate, and a great increase of Federal Members in the Lower House. And they consider this as establishing such a check on the measures of the Democratic Party as will paralyze, if not defeat them altogether. On the whole therefore, the Elections have afforded triumph to the Federal Party, which the ruinous effects of the Embargo are every day strengthening. The irritation against Great Britain is fast wearing off, and the most anxious wish appears to be a renewal of the commercial intercourse between the Countries. If therefore the Business of the *Chesapeake* was once removed out of the way, and some mode could be adopted to discriminate between the Seamen of both Nations, I believe a greater cordiality would soon take place than at any period since the Revolution. The present suffering of this Country, though a temporary inconvenience, will, I am convinced, be ultimately very beneficial to Great Britain. They feel how necessary her friendship is to their prosperity. A large proportion of them begin to reason justly of the motives of self-defence which induce Great-Britain to issue the restrictive orders she has done; and they appear much alarmed at the increasing Power of Bonaparte.

In the Papers I have the honor to enclose, your Excellency will perceive that the original measure of Embargo has been followed by a multitude of other restrictive Acts, to make this destructive measure more general and effective.¹⁹ These additional Acts have been occasioned by a knowledge, that at New Orleans, Passamaquaddy, and the American Territory contiguous to our Settlements in Canada, Flour and every Species of American produce were finding their way to the British and Spanish Territories. Instead, however, of these Acts producing the smallest check to the exportation of those Articles which we need, the Trade to Passamaquaddy, has been almost the only trade carried on since I have been here, and the Quantity of Flour and other Articles shipped there have been immense. A few days ago the Custom-House, after receiving the last restrictive Act, took back the Papers from two or three Vessels that had cleared out from Passamaquaddy. This excited a Clamour against the Collector, as the owners in making their Shipments, had not, as yet, violated either of the Embargo Laws, though the nature of the Shipments, and the place to which they were going, left no doubt as to the Market they were designed for. I have

¹⁸ James Sullivan was re-elected governor of Massachusetts in April, 1808, by a good majority, but with a small Federalist majority in the senate and house of representatives.

¹⁹ Acts of January 9, March 12, and April 25, 1808.

had many questions asked me relative to this Trade by Merchants here, who have great Stocks by them, and are suffering severely. As the Shipments made to Passamaquaddy, have drawn the attention of the Government to that Quarter, I have advised them to make their deposits on other parts of their extensive Coast, where no alarm is excited. They have taken this hint, and I am convinced that Shipments in all directions, and of every Species of Articles that our Government may think it necessary to encourage the importation of, will find their way into our Territory. While Congress remained in Session, a hope was entertained by the Merchants here, that the Embargo would be taken off, and the majority of them were patiently enduring the evil, in hopes it would not be of long continuance. But as Congress has now adjourned until November,²⁰ and there are on Hand immense quantities of Fish which will perish as the warm weather comes on, I find within these few days that many of them have begun to pack dry fish in Hogsheads, and are determined to find means of sending it to a Market. Many individuals who have these perishable articles on hand, will be ruined if they do not take these measures to extricate themselves; and were there a thousand Embargo Laws, they would have no effect in restraining them. On the whole, I am satisfied there are no Articles of Provision, nor any Species of Naval Stores which this Country produces that may not easily be procured, if it was once known, to what extent they could be admitted into our Colonies,²¹ and what facility and security could be given to enterprising men here, who would exert themselves to introduce them.

As far as respects military preparations in this Country, there are none whatever. In the early part of the late Session of Congress, the President recommended calling into actual Service 25,000 Militia and the raising 6000 regular Troops. After much discussion, and a variety of projects for carrying these measures into effect, Congress has at last, negatived the proposal for calling into Service the 25,000 Militia. A Bill has passed for raising the 6000 men, and recruiting parties are daily expected in the New-England States; but the best informed men here, assure me, that very little progress will attend their exertions in this quarter. It is generally looked upon as a very unnecessary measure, and there is none of that enthusiasm here, that would be calculated to contribute to its success. Those who are most sanguine as to the success of the recruiting Parties, do not think it possible to raise the 6000 men contemplated within a year. It is supposed the President, who appoints the Officers, has more in view by the exercise of his patronage, the increase of his Party, than any other object whatever. There is therefore as far as respects hostile preparations, nothing taking place in this Country, at present, to excite the smallest alarm in His Majesty's Government; and as Congress is now adjourned to November, there are no material measures that can be adopted, that could have any effective tendency.

The Presidents real object in the Embargo, has undoubtedly been to league with France, as far as he dare, in general measures for the destruction of the Commerce and Maritime resources of Great-Britain.

²⁰ Congress adjourned April 25, 1808.

²¹ Orders in Council of April 11, 1808, ordered British naval officers and other officials not to interrupt any neutral vessel which was taking lumber or provisions to the British West Indies.

But as Philosophers in general make wretched Politicians, so has he totally miscalculated his measure and the effects it would produce. In his endeavours to injure Great-Britain, he has reduced this Country to the utmost state of suffering. These sufferings will increase as long as the Embargo continues, they have already greatly influenced the Elections, and if no new circumstance of irritation takes place on our part, and His Majesty's Government steadily and quietly pursues its present system, I am convinced the most beneficial effects to both Countries will ultimately result.

I have been at Marblehead and Salem. These Towns are much divided in their politics. At Marblehead their extensive Fishery is all at a stand, and the Vessels usually employed in it, laying useless in Port. Two Companies of Militia Artillery were under Arms, the day I passed there, it being their training day. The Officers affect an imitation of the French in their Uniforms; but the general appearance of the Companies, had nothing whatever about them, to excite any other than risible sensations. Several Militia Companies have paraded since my arrival in Boston: But the best of them appear to me inferior to the Militia Light Infantry Company of Halifax.

At Salem a great number of valuable Vessels are laying at the Wharves—Business of all kinds totally suspended, and in passing the whole extent of the Margin of their harbour, I could scarcely find a seaman. They have gone among their friends in the country. Very few who have the appearance of British Seamen are to be seen either here or at Boston. This Town is filled with India goods. The Trade which Great Britain has allowed them at Calcutta, and other of our Ports in India, and their Trade with China, and the North-West Coast of America, has made them generally rich. No bankruptcies have taken place here, in consequence of the Embargo, nor are any expected. There is no Sea-Port in this State where there is a more general appearance of wealth, and where the Merchants are so completely independent.

I would have visited the State of New-Hampshire, but being satisfied from the best information, that there were no Military preparations there, or in any part of the Eastern Country, and nothing to excite the attention to any of your Excellency's objects, I thought such a journey would be useless, and have therefore omitted it.

As the information from Washington after my arrival here satisfied me that I could not reach it before the rising of Congress, I thought it better to linger here until the *Emulous* was ready to return to Halifax.

Besides these observations which I have in a desultory manner committed to paper as they occurred, your Excellency will find a general state of the Politics of this Country in the Papers and Pamphlets enclosed. Among these Mr. Pickering's²² and Mr. Monroes²³ Letters have produced very general and valuable effects. There are in the Federal Papers many excellent observations, and those Papers are generally supported by the Wealth and Talents of the Country.

²² *A Letter from the Hon. Timothy Pickering, a Senator of the United States from the State of Massachusetts, exhibiting to his Constituents a View of the Imminent Danger of an Unnecessary and Ruinous War. Addressed to his Excellency, James Sullivan, Governor of the State* (Boston, March 9, 1808).

²³ Monroe's letter of February 28, 1808, to the Secretary of State. *American State Papers, Foreign Affairs*, III. 173.

I shall now proceed without delay to the Southward, and shall not fail to communicate to your Excellency, every thing that occurs, worthy of Notice, from any place where I can, with safety transmit my Letters.

I cannot however close this Letter, without noticing to your Excellency, that I have experienced every attention from Mr. Allen,²⁴ the British Consul here, that I have found him active and intelligent, warmly attached to Government, and that your Excellency may at all times with confidence rely on his zeal and ability.

I have the honor to be
Your Excellency's
Most obedient
Humble Servant
JOHN HOWE

[Endorsed:] Boston 5th May 1808
Mr. John Howe
in Sir George Prevost's
20th May 1808

Original.

IV. HOWE TO PREVOST.

Extract of a letter from Mr. John Howe dated New York, 31st May 1808, to His Excellency Lieut. General Sir George Prevost.

I lost no time after closing my last letter, in proceeding through the Western part of the State of Massachusetts and thro' the State of Connecticut. Though no very material circumstances arrested the attention in this progress, yet I was highly gratified in meeting with people in all directions, and of all descriptions manifesting a most decided wish for a reconciliation with Great Britain, and reprobating the measures of the President. His Embargo pinches alike the Farmer and the Merchant. If I was gratified in finding such a disposition in Massachusetts, this gratification was much increased as I progressed through Connecticut. Here they speak upon the subject with a degree of boldness that astonishes me, and many of them even lamenting publicly that ever they were separated from Great Britain. Their Elections this year, as they have been, are decidedly Federal. Great pains have been taken to fix democratic printers in the principal towns in Connecticut, to change if possible the public opinion: but the general opposition to them has been so great, and they have been so severely prosecuted for libels, that they have soon been obliged to transplant themselves to a more congenial soil.

Another artifice to corrupt these people, is to introduce French Schoolmasters in the Country Villages where there is any considerable population, under a pretence of teaching the French Language. One of these was attempting to fix himself at Litchfield when I was there. But the honest indignation of these people soon convinced me, the French will never become the universal language there. This idea of making the French language universal, which was suggested by Colbert, the Minister of Louis 14th, is pursued by Bonaparte with great zeal in this country. A plan for the more expeditious teaching of this language, has been lately sent free of expense through all the Post Offices in these States. It was shewn to me by one of the Postmasters, and among

²⁴ Andrew Allen, grandson of Chief Justice Andrew Allen of Pennsylvania.

other extraordinary ideas, peculiar to Frenchmen, it states, that the design of this plan was "*to bring the French language home to every man's door*". What rendered the forwarding of this plan, free of expense, through the Post Offices, more noticeable to me, was that it was easy to see in it the readiness of the Executive of this Country to forward the most extravagant wishes of the Emperor of France. For there never was a country, in which Executive influence had shewn itself so plainly, as in the establishment of the Post Office. All the Federal Postmasters have been turned out, and the whole correspondence of the Country placed in democratic hands, and I find cautious people here, are many of them afraid to trust political communications through them. Frenchmen may however not only trust them, but the most extravagant plans of their Government be disseminated through the Country free of Expense.

The Emissaries of Bonaparte are numerous in this country and the extreme licentiousness with regard to Government, which prevails here, furnishes them frequent opportunities to do mischief. By Emissaries like these, has he everywhere prepared the destruction of the Nations of Europe. And yet it seems as if nothing will effectually open the eyes of Men to the mischievous subtlety of his proceedings.

There has nothing turned up since my arrival in New York deserving of notice, except the burial of the bones of persons, who during the time His Majesty's Troops had possession of this city, were buried at the Wallibout. These bones consisted of some of our own Troops and Sailors, and occasionally some of the men who died out of the Prison Ship. The Bank having washed partly away uncovered some of the bones. The Democratic party, as an Electioneering trick, and to revive the ancient enmity to Great Britain, seized upon these bones, as belonging to American prisoners, who through cruelty had perished on Board the Prison Ship. These Patriots set to work with zeal, and actually dug up as many bones as have filled 13 Coffins, and with the most ridiculous parade, after proceeding through the principal Streets of the City, as Your Excellency will perceive by the Papers, crossed Brooklyn Ferry, and proceeded to the place of interment, where they closed the Farce with prayers and orations equally profane and ridiculous.²⁵ Few persons of real character attended this cavalcade, though it suspended all business in the City for the day. The Governor²⁶ expressed to his friends his disapprobation of it, but was obliged to join the Farce or sacrifice his popularity. General Morton who commanded the Troops on the occasion, was I understand equally averse to it. He had in his general orders on the occasion, which are among the papers sent, endeavoured to take off the edge of this measure, as designed to revive animosities, which ought to be forgotten.

When I observe the licentiousness of this country, their continual recurrence to Elections, the manner in which all the Officers of the Government are obliged to cringe for popular favor, which gives and strips them of all their consequence in a moment, I cannot help experiencing the most pleasing sensations on reflecting that I am a subject of Great Britain, whose inestimable constitution, defines and secures the rights of all descriptions of Men, and the Acts of whose dignified execu-

²⁵ See *An Account of the Interment of the Remains of 11,500 American Victims to the Cruelty of the British* (New York, 1808).

²⁶ Daniel D. Tompkins.

tive, originate with a Sovereign, who loves and is the Father of his People.

In my letter of the 5th, Your Excellency was apprized of the great change in political sentiments which the Embargo was operating in Massachusetts. By the papers I now enclose, it will be seen that this change has already produced effects more rapid than I contemplated when I left Boston. That both Senate and House, have become decisively federal, and that they are already adopting resolutions of the most plain and decisive nature. Mr. Jefferson has plunged himself into such a situation, he dare not suspend the Embargo: for though Congress passed a Law to give him a suspending Power he refused his assent to the Act,²⁷ and nothing can be clearer, than that if he does not do the Act away by some means or other it will totally destroy both his influence and that of his party.

[Endorsed:] In Sr. George Prevosts
18 June

V. HOWE TO PREVOST.

Extract of a Letter from Mr. John Howe to His Excellency Lieut. General Sir George Prevost, dated New York 7th June 1808.

On my arrival at New York I found the election for the City had terminated, and unfavorable to the Federal Ticket.²⁸ And though complete returns are not yet made throughout the state, there is reason to think there will be a majority in favor of the Democratic party. Yet it is gratifying to find that the operation of Mr. Jefferson's Embargo measure has not been without great effects here, by the comparatively small majorities with which these Elections have been carried in many districts, and the entire change of sentiments which have been manifested in others. And it is the opinion of well informed men, that if these Elections could have been delayed a month or six weeks, they would have terminated very differently from what they have done. One great and fatal effect on the elections in this city, arises from the immense number of foreigners among them. These men acquire power to Vote after a residence of five years. Among persons of this description are nearly 7000 Irishmen, who tho' many of them have been here but a short time, make no scruple to come forward and swear for each other. Emmet²⁹ is at the head of these men, and is their prime mover and conductor. There is an Irish Society to which they generally belong, one of the rules of which is, that every member on pain of expulsion, shall follow implicitly the political sentiments of the Society. Every days experience shews, that men who will be restless and intriguing under one Government, will be so under every other. A great part of the Intrigues which agitate this country, originate with men whom the Nations of Europe have been compelled to spue out from among them, and wherever they get a footing, they will be a perpetual source of disease to the body politic. Their having obtained footing in this country is openly lamented by the best men here: but they have become so numer-

²⁷ An error. See p. 91, *post*, and note 32.

²⁸ DeWitt Clinton had just carried the city in support of the administration. In the state no election for governor was to take place this year.

²⁹ Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827), a brother of Robert Emmet.

ous they do not know how to counteract the mischiefs they are continually effecting. Another evil which has attended their Elections here, has arisen from the following circumstance. When the democratic party a few years ago obtained the ascendancy, they found a number of the Counties so decidedly federal, that they carried a law in the legislature for a new division of Counties, and in this way they mixed where they had a super-abundance of democrats, some of these in the federal districts so as to over balance the party and establish more generally their power, and in order to accomplish this object, they have effected the most unnatural division of counties that could possibly be imagined. I mentioned to your Excellency in my letter by the *Emulous*, that the only measure of a Military nature, which Congress had agreed to, was to raise 6000 Regular Troops, and that recruiting parties were expected at Boston. Since my arrival here, I find that all that has as yet taken place, to carry this measure into effect has been the appointment of the Officers by the President. No Officers have yet come forward to recruit, and it is now very probable that the season will elapse before anything effective is done in the business. Various plans have been projected for fortifying this harbour, but nothing is doing towards it, except some further works which are constructing on Government³⁰ Island, where they intend erecting a block-house. The general opinion here is that all they are doing is a perfect waste of the public money. I visited a few days ago their Navy Yard. I found here the *Constitution* one of their largest and best Frigates. They have been stripping her sides to the water and have again planked her up, and I imagine in two months she may be fit for sea. I am informed by a gentleman on whose information I think I can rely, that when she was paid off here and her Men discharged, there was not twenty American sailors belonging to her, that her whole crew with the exception of a few other foreigners, was entirely composed of british seamen. Besides this frigate there were lying at the Yard two or three Bomb Ketches, and there are also lying there, and in different parts of the harbour about twenty Gun boats, which appear to me much to resemble our Bermuda Cutter-Schooners, though I think them in size and appearance much inferior to them. These Gun boats are a just subject of ridicule to Men of sense of all parties here. There are Cannon in the Navy Yard for the equipment of three or four frigates. There is also in this Yard laid the keel of a 74 Gun ship, but no steps are taken for her completion. About 100 Marines were under Arms, and exhibited a very soldierly appearance. The Fort on Governor's Island has a garrison of about 60 continental Soldiers, and this is everything of an established Military nature to be found here. Several Regiments of Militia have at times been under Arms since my arrival here, and a company of Light horse. These have been dressed in Uniforms and appear in better order than any Military Exhibitions I have seen in any other part of the States. In the gaudiness of their Uniforms, and in their manner they have a wonderful disposition to imitate every thing French, and if they have not the military talents of that nation they certainly shew they are not behind hand with them in vain or tinsel quality. The French Privateer which lately took the *Duke of Montrose*' Packet in the West Indies is now here and refitting. She mounts 8 Guns, besides a large Gun in the centre which works on a traverse. Two gentlemen have arrived here

³⁰ Governor's?

from Philadelphia, and entered a prosecution against the Captain for his piratical proceedings, and they have actually succeeded in getting him into Gaol. He has offered Bail, which they have refused to accept, and it is said he must remain in Gaol until their Court sits in November. Several of these french privateers have been lately on their coast, and it would be a gratifying circumstance to the federal party here, if our Cruizers could pick them up. One lately sailed from Philadelphia and was permitted to take away a considerable quantity of flour and other Articles, which are refused to every other nation.

Every step I take in this country, and the various conversations I have had with men of opposite Sentiments in it, convince me more and more that the termination of Mr. Rose's mission without effecting its object was the most fortunate circumstance that could have occurred. My reasons for this opinion are as follows—

1. Had the satisfaction offered by our Government through Mr. Rose have been accepted, and the Embargo in consequence removed, such is the extreme pressure of this measure, it would have been every where received as the greatest boon, and would have added in the greatest degree, to the popularity of the present Administration. It would have insured to Mr. Madison the Election to the Presidency, and the continuance of the same system that is so ruinous to this country, and so injurious to Great Britain. And they shew these propensities in all their public Acts: and they would shew them plainer were they not afraid of the Sovereign people. It is therefore the manifest interest of Great Britain that Mr. Jefferson and his confidential friends should be removed from the Administration of this Government if possible.

2. By the rejection of the satisfaction as tendered by Mr. Rose, Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison put their popularity to the test of public opinion. And there was a time in this country when a degree of popularity did attach to this Government for the part it had borne in the negociation. In conversing with Federalists or Democrats, I find a universal accordance in opinion, that in the correspondence between Mr. Rose and Mr. Madison, the strength of the argument on which the point ultimately turned, was with Mr. Madison, and that he had in his reasonings discover[ed] more ability than Mr. Rose. And if our Government could have been persuaded either by Mr. Madison's reasonings, or by his non-importation or Embargo Acts to relinquish the point of honor in question, the pride of all parties here would have been highly gratified. But when the sophistical reasonings of this Government were thrown out of the question, as they have completely done by their favorite measure of the Embargo, which they affirmed would soon bring Great Britain to her senses by starving her Manufactures, and her West India Islands; since it has fully appeared that none of these wonderful effects have been produced by it, the popularity of the Administration has been on the Wane, and it is now nearly reduced to a certainty that Mr. Madison will not be the President. Whatever lack of argument is therefore to be found in Mr. Rose's communications (and I own I think them in several respects very deficient) this ruinous measure is superabundantly supplying. It is that *Argumentum ad hominem* which seizes the man with irresistible force, and bears down all before it. Upwards of 80 houses in this city have already been reduced to bankruptcy by it. 500 Sail of Vessels, the greater part Ships and Brigs, are lying useless by the wharves of this City. The ruin of thousands yet hangs by this de-

structive measure. The Merchant is hourly complaining. The Farmer is complaining. The Mechanic and Labourer is complaining. The Car-men of this City which are a very numerous body are loudly complaining. In short this evil entwines itself around every body, and every body is railing at the Embargo. They have got into a scrape, and they see no way to get out of it. And yet to do the people justice they have borne their sufferings with much philosophy. But if Mr. Jefferson continues this experiment a few Months longer it will to a certainty prevent the Election of Mr. Madison, and introduce at least some change in the present system. And almost any change of them would be more favorable to Great Britain than the continuance in power of the present rulers. For though I have no opinion of some of the other candidates who are striving for the Presidency, yet if they are brought into power by the pressure of the Embargo on the public feelings, they dare not risk their popularity with the Sovereign people by continuing it. Another reason which would render the introduction of new Men desirable, is that the present men have largely committed to paper their public opinions, and men get so insensibly wedded to opinions once so expressed, that it is difficult to overrule their prejudices. New Men would not labour under that difficulty; and if they were men of sense and political observation, they would not be very desirous of pressing measures which had involved their country in misery, and which measures were predicated as doctrines, which our Government have again and again declared to be inadmissible. Should a change of men and measures take place in this country, and which their present sufferings render highly probable, I do not conceive that any material injury would occur in adjusting the very point on which Mr. Rose parted with this Government. For it seems to me that this might be done by letting our disavowal of the affairs of the *Chesapeake*, and the withdrawing the President's proclamation take place at the same time precisely. And that an idea of this kind occurred to Mr. Madison, is evident, by the following Extract from his correspondence with Mr. Rose, where he says, "But adhering to the moderation by which he has been invariably guided, and anxious to rescue the two nations from the circumstances under which an abortive issue to your Mission necessarily places them, he has authorized me in the event of your disclosing the terms of reparation, which you believe will be satisfactory, and on its appearing that they are so, to consider this evidence of the justice of His Britannic Majesty as a pledge for an effectual interposition with respect to all the abuses against a recurrence of which the Proclamation was meant to provide, and to proceed to concert with you a revocation of that Act, bearing the *same date with the Act of reparation* to which the United States are entitled". And I am fully of opinion, that such a change is operating on the public mind here, as will in a few Months lead to such a change of Men and measures, as will render a reconciliation between Great Britain and this country easily attainable upon the footing of that perfect self respect which alone can render a reconciliation permanent or desirable. There is no Man who reads attentively the numerous charges brought by Mr. Madison in his correspondence with Mr. Rose, and the insolent pretensions urged, not only in that correspondence, but in all the public papers, which have come from the pen of Mr. Madison, but must be convinced that no real reconciliation could have taken place even if Mr. Rose had accomplished the particular object of his

Mission. Never was there a measure of our Government more deserving of the thanks of the nation, than the late proclamation, declaring His Majesty's determination to take our Seamen from Merchant Vessels, whenever we can find them. And this determination neither Mr. Madison or Mr. Jefferson will ever forgive. It has at once struck at all their insidious reasonings on this important subject, and stripped them of the means of injuring our Naval Strength, which their servile accordance with the Wishes of Bonaparte, has led them unceasingly to rush to accomplish. It was a great pleasure to me as I traversed the New England States, to find a general disposition to relinquish these pretensions, and to admit the justice of the reasons, on which our Government reclaims its subjects. At Salem particularly I not only found them acquiescing in our right, but they assured me, they had entered upon a practice corresponding with it, by refusing to take any of our Seamen in their Vessels. For when they had done it, they had been frequently been taken out by our cruisers, and their Voyages thereby marred. As therefore they knew they had no real claim to the services of these Men and as they had suffered a real injury by taking them, they were determined to confine their crews, to their own people.

I find many here who do not pretend to deny our right, but who would have been highly gratified if Mr. Madison's sophistry on this important subject could have prevailed. A subject of so much importance that I sincerely hope that our Government will never again suffer it to be brought into discussion. This leads me to another reason why Mr. Rose's mission is of benefit to the nation.

3. While the negotiation was pending, there were in this state and the other Southern States thousands of British Seamen whose services were lost to their country: And they would have continued lost to their country, if the negotiations had succeeded. For this Government never would in sincerity have lent its aid for the recovery of them. Since the Embargo which has thrown them out of employ, they are getting away from this country in every Vessel they can, to His Majesty's dominions, and I am convinced, if the Embargo continues Six Months longer very few of them will be found in this country. As an attention to this important subject was recommended to me by your Excellency in consequence of a Letter from Capt. Douglas, I shall make a separate communication to your Excellency, in which I shall point out the best means that have occurred to me, for giving facility to this object.³¹

4 This country has long both rulers and people entertained an idea, that Great Britain and her Colonies, particularly her West India Colonies, could not do without them. And so fully was Mr. Jefferson possessed with that idea, that he conceived his foolish embargo measure, would inflict such an injury on us, as would soon compel our Government, to give up the order relative to seamen, the respective orders, founded on the Milan decree to punish without enquiry any of our Officers whose conduct they saw fit to call in question, and in short that it would compel the nation to relinquish its sovereignty on the Sea, and to become as contemptible as they would delight in rendering her. In this expectation, and to co-operate as far as they dared with Bonaparte, in his attempts to destroy the Commerce of England this Embargo was laid. That these were the manifest intentions of this Government, every man of sense here readily admits. But every mischief Mr. Jef-

³¹ See no. VI., *post*.

erson calculated, as it respected Great Britain, has been averted, and the whole pressure of this mighty evil is every day operating with increased effect on this devoted Country, and will each day bring its effects closer home to him and his coadjutors.

In our happy Colony of Nova Scotia, and our neighbouring colonies, we have been long complaining, that our fisheries were injured by giving to these people the free intercourse they had with our West India Islands. We have constantly affirmed, that as far as respected fish, our settlements and those of Newfoundland could furnish all that was necessary. These people have denied this, and our West India Planters, have joined in the clamour. This Embargo is giving an opportunity to try the experiment, and I have no doubt, but the exertions of our Fishermen, and Merchants will prove what we have contended for to be correct.

They appear much mortified here, when I tell them, that we consider the Embargo a great blessing in Nova Scotia, and that we think the Bill should have been entitled "An Act for the better encouragement of the British Colonies in America".

They frequently ask me very anxiously, if I do not think her Government will soon be induced to take off the restrictive decrees, if our Manufactures are not suffering very severely, if we are not starving for Flour in the West Indies. I assure them very gravely that our Manufacturers have new sources open to them in the trade to the Brazils, St Domingo and other Channels which our Navy is continually opening, that the restrictive decrees will not be removed as long as the cause exists which produced them, that flour is flowing in every day, not only for our own wants but for exportation, That I am convinced our Government will give them no interruption, and that they will be left as long as they please to amuse themselves with their Philosophical Embargo Experiment. They are becoming every day more and more convinced that Great Britain and her possessions can and will do without them. That though it is confessed they take off a considerable quantity of our Manufactures, yet that the raw Materials we have been accustomed to take in return, we can procure elsewhere; and if by a long continuance of the Embargo, we all [are] compelled to seek to other countries for them, it may so alter the course of trade in these respects, as to make it very doubtful if it will ever again return to the same channel. Their Southern Cotton, which found so excellent a Market in Great Britain, and the Sales of which was making such rapid fortunes to the Planters in Georgia and the States contiguous, would not a few days ago produce at Auction Ten cents per pound, when the Merchants here assure me, before the Embargo it found in the City a ready sale at 24. The prices of all Articles we have been accustomed to take from them, are reduced in nearly the same ratio. Besides the injury the Embargo is daily heaping on this deluded people, all the accounts received here from the French Islands shew that they are reduced to extreme distress for want of provisions. At Guadeloupe flour was 90 dollars a barrel and hardly to be procured at that. So that the measure which was to ruin England, turns out a source of great and universal affliction to all Mr. Jefferson's dear friends whom he intended should be benefited by it. There is no doubt now entertained by any person here, but if they knew how to effect it, their Government would be glad to get rid of it. Congress passed a Law to empower the Presi-

dent to suspend this Act. It had been generally supposed that the President had refused his assent to this Act—he had hesitated about it, but it now appears he finally agreed to it; and the day I closed my last letter to Your Excellency it first made its appearance.³² But this Act is not calculated to remove the difficulty, as the power to suspend the Embargo Laws rests solely on the previous removal of the restrictive decrees of England and France. And sincerely do I hope that no step will be taken by our Government to help Mr. Jefferson out of this difficulty. Our Government can at present do nothing better than to look quietly on, and let Mr. Jefferson pursue his own measures until he is tired of them. And if his patience should not be very soon exhausted I am convinced his *masters, the people*, will at no great distance of time satisfy him that they will not bear such extreme and useless sufferings with impunity. While I express a wish that our Government may take no step to remove Mr. Jefferson's present difficulties, I at the same time hope, that no new cause of irritation will take place on our part, and that our Cruizers, instead of going to the extent of their orders, may discover as much forbearance as the good of the service will possibly admit of. Any more irritation on our part is the only thing that could revive the dying popularity of Mr. Jefferson's measures. If we remain quiet, and his Embargo continues much longer, all will end right at last. It may take some time to remove the disease, but I am convinced the cure will be more radical.

5. The failure of Mr. Rose's Mission has also had the beneficial effect, to give a fair trial of what the people of this country are very fond of boasting of, which is *their Republican Virtue*. And the result of the trial has been to prove it *the Virtue of a Strumpet*, and that Gold, Imperial gold, will with the utmost facility procure the Lady's favors at any time. Congress had no sooner passed the first Embargo Law, than it was evaded. Another and another Law was passed to supply the deficiency of the first, and to prevent its being evaded.³³ Since Congress rose, Mr. Jefferson has found all these Laws ineffectual to restrain the Trade, and he has been issuing out, one angry regulation after another, and sending them to the Collectors, in some of which he has assumed powers which the Constitution does not give him. As the Embargo Laws have had no effect, and his regulations as little, he has at last sent the *Wasp*, with a detachment of Troops to Passamaquaddy, and he has ordered out portions of the Militia on the frontiers of Canada. But all he can do will not keep the Republican Lady honest. Upwards of 50,000 barrels of Flour have been sent away from this City since the Embargo took place. And I am convinced that either here, or in any part of the Union, it would be easy to contract with individuals to furnish anything the country produces, and to send it where it might be necessary. Since the King's last Order in Council, which had only been published here a few day's ago,³⁴ a Sloop laden with Flour came down the North River in the Night, passed boldly by their Gun Boats, and got to sea, intending to go to our Islands in the West Indies.

In addition to the foregoing observations, I would turn your Excellency's attention to a letter of Mr. Jefferson to the Democratic society of Philadelphia, which you will find in the Evening Post of June 7th.³⁵

³² Act of April 22, 1808.

³³ See note 19, above.

³⁴ See note 21, above.

³⁵ Letter of May 25, 1808. Jefferson's *Writings*, "Memorial" edition, XVI. 303.

It is deserving of Notice on several accounts. This democratic Society sent him an Address more than three Months ago, and he has neglected to answer it. But as Congress was not now sitting, and there was no call for him to communicate his sentiments on the present state of things, he has taken this mode to do it. He admits in his exordium that they have fallen into sad times, *times which require vigilance and embarrass deliberation*. These words express a great deal, and shew clearly that the President has fallen into a predicament, from which he does not know how to extricate himself—and this is exactly the situation in which he is placed. After lamenting the defective Virtue of a great part of the Citizens, he hints obscurely at War, but don't intimate with whom, but the language he makes use of has excited the warmest indignation of the Federal party. Your Excellency will perceive some indignant remarks in the paper of the 7th and it will not end here for these remarks will soon be followed by others still more severe. Mr. Jefferson in this Letter also talks of encouraging Manufacturers, as another Tub to the Whale, and to shew that he would injure Great Britain if he could. But all his experiments will not answer. The people are universally becoming tired of them. If he has War in view, he will find the country generally adverse to it. He has let the time go past when he might have plunged them into it, And by destroying the Revenue of the Country as he is doing by the Embargo he is daily diminishing their means to go to War.

[Endorsed:] In S^r. G. Prevosts

18 June

VI. HOWE TO PREVOST.

[Copy]

NEW YORK 7th June 1808.

Sir,

In consequence of the letter which Captain Douglas put into Your Excellency's hands, on the recovery of British Seamen from this Country, and your request that I would consider it among the objects recommended to my attention, I lost no time on my arrival here, in conversing with the British Consul on the subject. I found that he had procured passages for a number of these Men, who had made application to him. He also mentioned that Mr. Erskine had recommended this subject to his attention immediately after the Embargo took place; that finding these men generally more or less in debt at their Lodgings, and having no means of paying those debts, he had written to Mr. Erskine to know how this expence was to be defrayed, and that Mr. Erskine had expressed himself unable to give him any satisfaction on the subject.

This led me to converse with Mr. Moore, the British Agent of Packets, who has given orders to the Captain of this Packet³⁰ to receive on board about Sixteen of these People; and if any means could have been sanctioned by Government to enable Mr. Moore to pay the debts of others who applied, none of which would have exceeded five pounds, and the greater part not three, I am convinced more than double the number might now have been sent.

If these men are got from this Country in merchantmen, they do not

³⁰ The *Queen Charlotte*, according to a marginal note in the original.

go into the King's Service as might be wished; but if they could be got away in Packets, the Admiral would have an immediate controul over them. I find Mr. Moore zealously disposed to serve Government in this business; and if Sir John Warren³⁷ would authorize him while the Embargo continues, to keep one or two Runners among the Tipling Houses here and enable him to pay the small debts of these people, I am convinced it would lead to the only effectual mode of accomplishing this business.

It would also be desirable that Sir John Warren should make some arrangement with the Captains of the Packets as they arrive at Halifax, on their way here, that there may be no impediment thrown in the way by them.

If Sir John Warren will communicate his wishes fully on this subject to Mr. Moore, I am convinced that Gentleman's zeal for the Service will lead him to enter with much industry into every measure which can lead to the attainment of this desirable object.

I have the honor to be

Yr. Excellency's

Most Obedient humble Servant

[Signed] JOHN HOWE

His Excellency

Sir George Prevost Bart:

[Endorsed:] Copy of a letter from
Mr. John Howe Post
Master of Halifax to
Lieut. Sir George Prevost Bt.
dated New York the 7th June 1808.

No. 3

In Sr G. Prevosts

19 June 1808

VII. HOWE TO PREVOST.

PHILADELPHIA, 22d June, 1808

Sir,

After closing my Letters to your Excellency by the *Queen Charlotte* Packet, I proceeded to the State of New Jersey, through which I progressed by very short Stages to this City. I had been led at New-York to suppose I should find the Inhabitants of New-Jersey very generally Democratic, which has been their Character for several years. But I was pleased to find, on mixing with them, that Mr. Jefferson's present measures, had excited great disgust, even in this State, and that whole Districts have so changed from Democracy to Federalism, that a strong hope is entertained by the Federalists, that their Election this year, will terminate in favor of Federal Candidates. What strengthens this hope, is, that their Elections do not take place until September, which will give to the Country more fatal experience of the destructive measures their Government is pursuing, And what will also have a powerful effect is, that throughout New-Jersey, and indeed every part of the Country, there is an appearance of excellent Crops of

³⁷ Rear-Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren, commanding on the North American station.

Grain, which if the Embargo continues, they will find no Sale for; and this in addition to the great Quantities of last year's Crop now on hand, excites a very strong sensation. For among all the Republican virtues I find in exercise in this Country, the Love of Money is by far the most predominant. On my arrival in Philadelphia, I found them bussily employed canvassing for the Election of State-Officers. In order to have an effect on these Elections, Duane the Editor of the *Aurora*, is seizing every circumstance that offers, which can in the least excite irritation against Great Britain; and among other predominant measures for this purpose, this Man, who is a Major in the Militia, has with some other violent partizans, induced a few companies of the Militia, the greater part of which are composed of Irishmen, to turn out this day, to celebrate the Battle of Monmouth, and the attack on the *Chesapeake*.³⁸ These Companies proceeded this Morning in Boats to Frankford, to exhibit there a Sham Fight, in which the British Troops are supposed to be defeated. This Celebration is a Counterpart to the Burial of the Bones at New-York. But it is by all discreet, well-disposed persons here (and this body I am happy to say is very numerous) looked upon with disgust. Federalism has greatly increased in this State; and there is strong reason to hope that Mr. Ross, the Federal Candidate, will be chosen Governor.³⁹ Their Elections in this State do not take place until October; and this is looked upon here as a very favorable circumstance, as the operation of the Embargo, will, before that time greatly strengthen the hands of the opposers of Government. All accounts from Washington agree in the opinion, that the Embargo will not be relaxed, but continued with all the vigour the Government can exert to enforce it. Mr. Jefferson, and the Heads of Departments are now convened at Washington. Mr. Gallatin, who had been at New-York, went through this City two days ago, on his Route to Washington. And Mr. Erskine, with whom I dined yesterday, informs me he shall proceed to Washington in Ten or Twelve days. He is anxiously waiting here the arrival of his Dispatches by the May Packet; and should they arrive within a few days, he will, in that case, proceed immediately to Washington. Nothing of National Consequence has turned up here, since the close of Mr. Rose's Mission; and so completely did every thing relating to that Mission terminate with him, that Mr. Moore, the Agent of Packets at New-York, informed me, that the Government Dispatches directed to Mr. Rose, which arrived after his Departure, he had, by a direction sent to him by Mr. Rose on leaving the Country, returned to England, instead of forwarding them to Mr. Erskine. I shall proceed through the Lower States of the Delaware, to-morrow, on my way to Baltimore, and finally, to Washington. I expect to meet Mr. Erskine, previous to my return to Halifax, either at Baltimore or Washington. The *Osage* is hourly expected with dispatches from England; and as the May Packet is expected also to bring Dispatches of importance, and which may lead to some decisive point, I shall endeavor to linger here, until I can bring to your Excellency some decisive opinion on the politics of the respective Countries. I have found Mr. Erskine very pleas-

³⁸ The affair of the *Chesapeake* and *Leopard* had occurred on June 22, 1807, the battle of Monmouth Court-house on June 28, 1778.

³⁹ In the election of 1808 James Ross was for the third time unsuccessful as Federalist candidate for the governorship of Pennsylvania; Simon Snyder, Democrat, was chosen.

ant and communicative. And I trust it will be in my power, on my return, to afford your Excellency every species of information, that can elucidate the politics of this Country, or any possible bearing they can have on the politics of Great Britain or her Dependencies.

On my first interview with Mr. Erskine, I found with him Mr. Nichol, a Gentleman, who had arrived from Upper Canada, with Letters from Governor Gore,⁴⁰ complaining of a most violent attack made on Boats belonging to the Michilimakinac Company, by Order of the American Collector in that District. I have since formed an acquaintance with Mr. Nichol, whom I find a sensible intelligent Man. He has, at my request, written me a Letter containing the particulars of this very extraordinary transaction, which I enclose for your Excellency's information. He has dated the Letter as if it had been sent from Niagara to me.

In addition to the Letter from Governor Gore, which Mr. Nichol brought with him, Mr. Erskine yesterday informed me, that he had just received a very pointed Letter from Sir James Craig on this important Subject. Mr. Erskine had an interview with Mr. Gallatin as he passed through this City, and urged that the Boats and their Cargoes should be immediately given up to the Company on Bonds, to wait the decision of the two Governments. This Mr. Gallatin did not think himself authorised to do, and Mr. Nichol is obliged to wait an Answer from Washington, which Mr. Erskine is daily expecting. This circumstance, among others, makes Mr. Erskine anxious to get to Washington; and if the Packet should not arrive in a reasonable time, he will set out without waiting for his dispatches.

I have had much conversation both with Mr. Erskine and Mr. Bond the British Consul here,⁴¹ on the subject of British Seamen. Mr. Erskine, as I mentioned to your Excellency, in my Letter by the *Queen Charlotte*, had some time since written to Col. Barclay⁴² on the subject, and he appears to me anxious that our Seamen should, if possible, be got out of this Country. I hope on my return to this City, I shall, if not before, receive an answer to my Letter to your Excellency on this Subject. Mr. Bond the Consul here appears to me to possess much ability and zeal to forward His Majesty's Service in this or any other respect, and will endeavor to seize every opportunity to effect this desirable object. He will, I am convinced, zealously attend to any suggestion, that may be made to him, by your Excellency or Sir John Warren, on this, or any other subject.

I visited a few days ago Fort Mifflin, which commands the entrance to this Harbour.⁴³ It appears in very indifferent repair—has Twenty-nine 32 Pounds mounted, and 4 small Mortars. The Angles of the Fort against which the operations of the *Vigilant* were directed in the

⁴⁰ Francis Gore, lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, under Sir James H. Craig as governor-general.

⁴¹ Phineas Bond, whose earlier correspondence with the Foreign Office was printed in the *Annual Report* of the American Historical Association for 1896. vol. I.

⁴² Thomas Barclay, British consul-general in New York.

⁴³ This work is described as follows in the report of the Secretary of War mentioned above, note 17: "A regular, inclosed work, with batteries, magazines, and barracks, principally erected in the years 1798, 1799, and 1800, and now in a good state of defence."

American War, still shew very plainly the effects of her well-directed fire. The Garrison of this Fort consists of a Captain, two Lieutenants and 70 Men. All the repairs of the Fort are done by its small Garrison, who complain exceedingly of the niggardly economy of their Government. It would require a large Sum of Money and several hundred Men, for some months to put this Fort into even tolerable repair. Except a few Gun Boats, there is no other Military Establishment here.

Your Excellency will perceive in the Philadelphia Papers enclosed, the Trial of an American Captain here, for an Assault on the French Consul, and on the Commander of a French Privateer. This Prosecution was carried on by the Government, in consequence of an application from the French Ambassador. Mr. Dallas the States Attorney,⁴⁴ endeavored to operate on the fears of the Jury, by setting before them the dreadful consequences of offending the Great Napoleon. The decision of the Jury, shewed that they did not participate either in the fears or the wishes of their Government. They acquitted the American of the Assault on the French Consul, and threw on him the Damages. The Assault on the Captain of the Privateer, being acknowledged by the American he was fined 100 dollars for a Breach of the Peace: and this Sum was instantly collected by the Spectators of the Trial. The general feeling on this occasion, was very clearly manifested, not to be in favor either of French influence or of French domination.

As the political aspect of this Country is every day changing, and I think changing for the better, I shall reserve what I shall have further to say on the politics of this State until I return from Baltimore. The Politics of this State are very essential, as it possesses great influence on the adjoining States. The wealth of the inhabitants of this City is very great, and a great proportion of the people are men of the most orderly and quiet habits. The Embargo has produced no failures here of any consequence, though great injury is sustained, and many of its inhabitants subjected to much suffering.

I have the Honor to be

Your Excellency's Most obedient

Humble Servant

JOHN HOWE.

Original.

VIII. HOWE TO PREVOST.

(Copy)

NEW YORK August 5th, 1808

Sir,

After forwarding my Letter to Your Excellency of June 22d, I left Philadelphia and proceeded for Baltimore, where I arrived on the 25th. The rapidity with which this City has risen within the last twelve years, to wealth and consequence is really astonishing. The credit of the British Merchant, the benefits of that Trade to India, which Jay's Treaty secured to them, and the adroitness and enterprize with which they have seized all the advantages which the destructive War that has so long afflicted the World presented to them, will soon render this City, as a Commercial one, superior to any to the Southward, except New York. I was therefore induced to tarry here until the 4th July. I found a number of excellent characters here, and who appreciate as they ought, the Commercial benefits they derived from their connection with Great

⁴⁴ Alexander James Dallas.

Britain. But I am sorry to say, this is by no means the general feeling. Enmity to our Nation has here arisen to a great and bitter height. I was induced to remain here the 4th July, the Anniversary of their independence, as I was informed there would be a great Military exhibition. Upwards of Three thousand Men were under arms, dressed in Uniforms, and made by far the best Military Appearance, I have seen in this Country. There were among them five Troops of Horse, and several Artillery Companies, which appeared very much to advantage. On enquiry I found that the whole of these Men had been clothed and organized, since the affair of the *Leopard* and *Chesapeake*. The great zeal and frenzy which that unfortunate circumstance occasioned, has been very assiduously kept alive here by two Irish Printers, who possess as much zealous enmity to Great Britain, as Duane, the Printer of the *Aurora*, without his ability. To counteract the Mischief of these Men, and to bring the Public mind once more to a rational view of the benefits to be derived from a friendly intercourse with Great Britain, a Society of Gentlemen have established a Federal Paper, which commenced while I was at Baltimore, and appears to be conducted with so much ability and determined opposition to Mr. Jefferson and the present order of things, that I have no doubt, the most beneficial consequences will finally result. But so deep a hold has the democratic disorder generally taken here, it will require a long course of suffering and reasoning to effect any Material cure. I left Baltimore on the 5th July, and arrived the same evening at Washington. In the Morning after viewing the Capital, which is in a most unfinished state, and exhibits the greatest waste of Public Money, I proceeded with a Gentleman to view their Dock Yard. This I found on a much more extensive Scale than I had imagined, and filled with good and convenient buildings of all sorts. I found lying at this Yard eight Frigates, *viz.* The *United States* of 44 Guns, the *Essex* of 40, the *John Adams*, *New York*, *Constellation*, *Adams*, *Boston*, and *Charleston* of upwards of 30 Guns each. The *United States* had just undergone a thorough repair and hauled off. The *Adams* Frigate had had her upper works repaired, and was lying keel out, for the purpose of coppering. The *Essex* Frigate had had her sides new planked, and by what I could learn from the Superintendent, it was intended to overhaul and repair seven of these Frigates. The *Boston* was so rotten, she was deemed irreparable. There is also here a fine Brig of 18 Brass Guns. I was mortified to find that the Superintendent of this Yard was an Englishman by the name of Fox, who had served his time at Plymouth, And one of the most ingenious Men I found in this Yard, was also a Scotsman, who had been completing a Model of a Dry dock. Observing a number of men in the Yard, I enquired of the Superintendent, how many were employed—to my astonishment he told me upwards of 500. It would seem by so large a number being employed, a considerable part of which had lately been taken in, that it was intended to repair immediately all these Frigates that may be found repairable; for what purpose a little time must shew. These ships will all need much repair, for they have been left for Years, without covering, rotting and renting [?] with the Sun; for while these People are perpetually talking of Republican Economy (another boasted Republican Virtue), I think I never saw a more profligate waste of Public Money than all the Public Works in this City afford. A number of Gun boats are building in this Yard, though every sensible man, and their own Naval

Officers are continually ridiculing them, as totally unfit for any defensive purpose.

I brought with me a Letter from Philadelphia to a Gentleman at Washington, through whom I expected to have been introduced to Mr. Jefferson; but unfortunately the Gentleman had gone the day before to Alexandria; and as I was anxious to complete my route to the Southward, I thought it not prudent to wait to seek an introduction to him in some other way. Indeed I expected on my return, to have found Mr. Erskine at Washington, in which case I should have gone again to that City. On my leaving Washington, I proceeded to George Town and spent a day about 3 Miles from George Town. I found a Cannon Foundary on an extensive Scale, and I was again mortified to find that this also was carried on by an Englishman of the name of Foxhall. He is completing a contract [for] Cannon for the States, and both his Brass and Iron Guns appeared to me extremely well executed. The day before my arrival at Washington, the 4th of July had been celebrated there; I met on the road to Washington, a Company of Flying Artillery, which had gone up from the Fort at Baltimore, to exhibit before the President. This Company belongs to the Continental Army, and appeared in good order. The President had a great Levy on the 4th July, and as another Tub to the Whale, he had on a Homespun Coat. To hear the Talk about this Coat at Washington and Georgetown would lead to the supposition, that these silly people supposed there was a sort of magic in it, which would work the ruin of the Manufacturers of Great Britain; and I am sorry to say that almost every person, contiguous to the Presidential Palace, and who learn their Sentiments there, most devoutly and ardently wish her destruction. Before I left Georges Town I learnt by the Newspaper, that the *Osage* had arrived; and I determined to proceed to Alexandria, which was only 12 Miles from Washington, and wait there, 'till the Messenger arrived at Washington. The evening of the Second day after my arrival at Alexandria, a Gentleman came on from Washington, who had spent the day after the arrival of Mr. Lewis there with the dispatches. He had had a conversation with Mr. Madison who assured him, that both England and France discovered no disposition to do them Justice, and that therefore the Embargo would continue as before.

Nothing could exceed the public disappointment at Alexandria, where every one had been looking for something decisive by this ship. A Schooner has since been sent to France and England to keep up the same farce, and amuse if possible, the public Mind. I received much attention from Mr. Patten the British Consul at Alexandria, to whom I communicated Capt. Douglas's wish respecting Seamen. He assured me, and on inspection of the Wharves, I found it to be true that there was scarcely twenty Seamen to be found in the place. He said if the Embargo was off, it would take a great length of time to collect Seamen to man the Vessels which are lying ruining by the Wharves. Since the astonishing prosperity of Baltimore, the Trade of Alexandria has fallen off much, although, except Norfolk it is the best Seaport in Virginia. I found a number of valuable people here, but the General Politics are the same as are every where to be found in Virginia. After leaving Alexandria I proceeded to Fredericksburg, and spent a day there. This City suffered much by a fire which took place about a Year ago, which destroyed nearly one half of it. Its Inhabitants may be reckoned among

the hottest Democrats in this State. My next excursion was to Richmond the Capital of Virginia, here though Politics run extremely high, I had much conversation with some of the best informed men in this State. They assure me the Election of President, being by General Ticket in that State, and not by districts, that Mr. Madison will have every vote. If it had been by districts, Mr. Munro might have divided the Votes in some degree. Their opinion of Mr. Jefferson is, that he is a man of talent and of much address, but that he [is] totally devoid of principle, and so attached to France, that nothing can induce him to hold an equal conduct to both Countries. Of Mr. Madison they think better as a Man, but that he is too closely attached to the same Politics with the President, to expect any change of system, if he should be chosen; and that he will succeed in every state to the Southward of Pennsylvania I am afraid is certain. I have in my route had so much opportunity of ascertaining the Sentiments of North and South Carolina and Georgia, that I am afraid the Federalists deceive themselves, in expecting any support from them. They are suffering extremely by the Embargo; but it will require much suffering to open the eyes of these southern People, who have the most bitter enmity to Great Britain, and a large proportion of whom are very unprincipled. I next proceeded by way of York Town to Hampton, at which place nothing occurred worth notice. From Hampton I took Packet and went over to Norfolk, where I arrived in two hours, and had soon the pleasure of an interview with Colonel Hamilton, the British Consul, by whom I have been entertained in the most hospitable manner. I remained four days in this Place and had an opportunity of mixing much with its Inhabitants. They are in general very warm in their enmity to Great Britain, and like the Mass of Virginians would be gratified at her destruction. But notwithstanding this there are a number of valuable Persons here, who are supporting a Federal Paper, which is laboring with considerable ability to correct the Public Mind, and is I am persuaded gaining ground. The irritation occasioned by the attack on the *Chesapeake* is in some measure wearing off, though it is a continual subject of conversation. The public mind has been kept much inflamed by an Irish printer of the name of O'Connor, who like his Brethren at Baltimore, is laboring to keep up, if possible, the enmity to Great Britain. They are suffering much from the Embargo here; though with all their Patriotism they are watching every opportunity to violate it. The day I left Norfolk, one of their Captains returned from Kingston, Jamaica. This man I had much conversation with. He sailed in a Brig from George Town, with 1,600 Barrels of Flour, cleared out for New Orleans—he said he had met with such bad weather, that he lost both Masts, and had his Rudder unshipped; but very *providentially*, he met with a British Man of War, which took him in tow, and carried him into Kingston. Here he had very *providentially* sold his Flour from 20 to 25 Dollars, and finding his Vessel very rotten, he had got her condemned, and sold her there, and so had wound up the whole concern. He was now on his way to George Town with a long protest, to clear himself of the bonds he had given at the Custom house there; and if they can be persuaded that all these *providential disasters* befel him, he will be off again to Jamaica in six weeks. Besides all the other evils to this Country occasioned by the Embargo, it leads to a continual Violation of Oaths, and to a profligacy of habits, the effects of which, will finally be severely felt in this Country.

I left Norfolk and proceeded up the Chesapeake Bay by Water to Baltimore, where I arrived on the 21st and learnt from Mr. Wood the Consul, who had been at Washington, with Mr. Erskine, that Mr. Erskine had returned with him to Baltimore, and had two days before gone on to Philadelphia. In consequence of which after spending two days at Baltimore, I proceeded to Philadelphia where I arrived on the afternoon of the 24th. On the 25th I dined with Mr. Erskine, and had a long conference with him on the present aspect of affairs. On enquiring of Mr. Erskine the nature of the communications by the *Osage*, and the effects that would be produced by them, I was astonished to learn, that after that ship had been in England some days, and our Government finding no communication made to it by the American Ambassador, that Mr. Canning applied to Mr. Pinckney to know, when he would be ready to make such communication. His answer was he had no communication to make. Mr. Canning with much surprize said, that this ship had been looked for with much anxiety, and that His Majesty's Ministers, alive to the situation of the two Countries, were perfectly disposed to enter into any discussions which could relieve the present embarrassments, and then with much emphasis, asked Mr. Pinckney "Have you received no dispatches which bear on the present situation of the two Countries, and will you not, in consequence, have any communication to make to this Government?" His answer was, "I have received no such dispatches, nor shall I in consequence have any communication to make." And from the day of her arrival to the day of her departure, no communication was made.

Notwithstanding this important fact the Government here, have been holding out most basely, the idea that remonstrance had been made to both England and France, and that both had alike rejected them. The Truth of the case has at length got before the Public and is producing the best effects. This Government, when Mr. Erskine was at Washington, were much disappointed to find, he had nothing from our Government to lay before them. They enquired if he had nothing to submit to them on the affair of the *Chesapeake*? He answered, nothing. They assumed a haughty tone on the occasion, and even threatened him with rupture, if satisfaction on this point was much longer delayed. And Mr. Erskine's mind is strongly impressed with the belief that Mr. Jefferson actually contemplates, and wishes a War with Great Britain, and that an attack on Canada and Nova Scotia, makes a part of his Plan. That Mr. Jefferson, and his Cabinet, wish a War with Great Britain, and that they would delight in the annihilation of the British Nation, I have seen too much evidence since I have been in this Country, for a moment to doubt. But that he can carry his wishes into effect, I much doubt, unless some new subject of irritation, should arise between our two Nations; and I am inclined to think, if Mr. Erskine's ideas are correct, as to his determination to go to War with us, that he will seek such a subject, either through his cruisers, which he has sent out to protect the Embargo Laws, or on the Boundaries of Canada or Passamaquady. For that he cannot, without some new subject of irritation excite generally a War Spirit in this Country at present, I am perfectly satisfied. And I therefore sincerely hope, that while we give every facility to the introduction of their produce, that prudent men will be stationed at those different point[s] of contact, that his hopes and expectations may, in this respect, be defeated. I had much satisfaction in this last inter-

view with Mr. Erskine, and was happy to find as far as respects the present Rulers of this Country, and their unprincipled enmity to Great Britain, there was between us no difference of opinion. When I went to the Southward of Pennsylvania, I proceeded in the hope, that in the ensuing election of President, I should find, at least, so much division of interest, as would throw a part of the Southern Votes into the Scale with the Middle and Northern States, as would prevent the Election of Mr. Madison. But since my Southern excursion, I am convinced that no confidence can be placed on any votes against Mr. Madison to the Southward of Pennsylvania. There is every where to the Southward a gradual Change of public opinion taking place, but it is too gradual to be reckoned upon in the present Election. At Pennsylvania they are engaged in a warm contest, and great expectation is entertained that the issue will be Federal. There is also a great change taken place in the Jerseys, but the issue is still doubtful. In New York, I believe they will generally vote for Clinton, and I believe it would be better that he should succeed than Madison, as it would at least lead to some change of System relative to Commerce; and this State is so highly a Commercial one, that it has a deeper interest in the renewal of Trade than any other State in the Union. Mr. Jefferson considers the Election of Madison as certain; for besides calculating on the Southern interest, which for the reasons I have mentioned, I think he is not mistaken in, he boasted to Mr. Erskine, that Governor Sullivan would negative the whole proceedings of the State of Massachusetts in the Choice of Electors, and so throw that State out of the Scale altogether in the Choice of President.⁴⁵ Both Mr. Erskine and myself are at present, for these reasons inclined to think that Madison will proceed, and if he does, it will be a source of mischief to both Countries.

The Accounts which have been received of the late opposition of the Spanish Nation to the tyranny of Bonaparte, have produced much good effect here; and whether the Spaniards succeed in their exertions in Europe or not it will certainly enable Great Britain to establish the Independence of South America, and furnish that employment to our manufactures, which the suspension of the Trade of this Country has in some measure occasioned. It has already had the effect on all parties here, to convince them their Embargo must now be useless—and they are very eagerly hankering after a Trade with South America. This resolution will also have another very good effect. It will put an end to the expectations of the intriguers in this Country, who have all had their projects for the subjugation of the Spanish possessions. And if the friendly intercourse of our Government, and that of South America should be established on a durable footing, South America may be made to form a Barrier between the future scheme of these Southern intriguers. Several French Armed Vessels are now in these States—a Brig at Washington, two Schooners at Philadelphia, and two at Charleston. It would be very desirable, on two accounts, if our Cruisers could pick them up. One is the injury they do to our Commerce, and another is the detection of the baseness of this Government which winks at their going away loaded with Flour and Provisions. The exposure of their hypocrisy is of much benefit here.

Recruiting parties are now parading every City in these States for raising the 6000 Men: but with all their exertions the business goes on

⁴⁵ See Amory's *Life of Sullivan*, II. 300–303.

very slowly. But if Mr. Jefferson does not succeed in raising this Army, the appointment of the Officers is answering his purpose almost as well. The Commissions are all given away for the purpose of promoting Mr. Madisons Election, and not a Man except of the Democratic Party can obtain them. I was pleased even in Virginia, where I first heard of Duanne's appointment,⁴⁶ to find that all parties were loath to believe it. They thought such an appointment disgraceful to the Army, but he was too necessary a Man in promoting the present Election to be neglected.

I stated to your Excellency in my Philadelphia Letter the attack which had been made on the Boats of the Michiliamakinac Company. Mr. Erskine acquaints me they have been given up with the furs, on bonds, subject to future investigation.

It was my intention to return to Halifax in this Packet; but some Letters I found here from Boston, have led me to think it best to go by way of Boston, as it will enable me to possess Persons there, in whom I can confide, of some facts in which the Northern States are interested, and be a means of increasing the laudible zeal they are discovering in opposition to the base designs of their Government. And I am thoroughly convinced baser Men never administered the affairs of any Country. My return by way of Boston, I do not expect will delay my arrival in Halifax more than a Week after the Packet; when in addition to what I have written, I shall have much verbally to communicate to Your Excellency; and if my excursion shall have tended in the smallest degree to the Service of His Majesty's Government, I shall be highly gratified.

I have the honor to be
Your Excellency's
Most obedient
humble Servant
[Sigd:] JOHN HOWE

To His Excellency

Sir George Prevost
etc, etc, etc.

[Endorsed:] Copy of a Letter from
Mr. Howe, to
Sir Geo. Prevost
dated at New York
the 5th Augt. 1808.

In Sr. G. Prevosts 25 Aug. 1808.

⁴⁶ President Jefferson appointed William Duane lieutenant-colonel of riflemen, July 8, 1808.

(To be continued.)